Essay #2: Rhetorical Analysis and Evaluation of an Argument

For your next essay, you will write an analysis and evaluation of a written argument. Choose either “The Obligation to Endure” by Rachel Carson or “Curbing Nature’s Paparazzi” by Bill McKibben to write about. In your essay, you will focus on how the argument is written and whether it is written effectively. You will not focus on whether you agree or disagree with the argument.

How to Write Your Essay:

- Begin with a brief introduction to the argument (author’s name, title, and a summary of roughly one or two sentences).
- Include a thesis statement in your introduction that evaluates the writer’s argument and establishes the criteria on which you are basing that evaluation. These criteria will be the points you develop in the body paragraphs of your essay.
- Focus on just two or three criteria so that you can develop your explanations of how they are used in the argument. These criteria will be rhetorical strategies (argumentative techniques) such as use of factual evidence, the writer’s tone, attention to opposing arguments, use of metaphor, attention to the audience’s values, etc. We will discuss rhetorical strategies in more detail as we discuss the readings in class.
- To support your evaluation and illustrate the criteria you have chosen, use specific references from the text. You will use the PIE structure for your body paragraphs and MLA format to integrate your quotations into the essay.
- Create an original title that reflects the central idea of your essay.

Thesis: The thesis should make an assertion about the effectiveness of the argument. While it may be difficult, try not to simply agree or disagree with the author. Instead, focus on analyzing and evaluating the way the argument is written. Bring a working thesis statement to class on Thursday, October 18.

Peer Review: Bring two copies of your typed, double-spaced rough draft on Monday, October 23 for peer review. If you fail to participate in peer review, 10 points will be deducted from your final essay. You must be here on time, with your essay printed in order to participate in peer review.

Final Draft: Revise your draft and bring it to class on Tuesday, October 23 in a folder with the rough draft, peer review comments, revision activity, and attached evaluation sheet. Five points will be deducted for each day an essay is late; no essays are accepted one week after the due date. This essay should be roughly 2-3 pages (about 600-800 words).
Essay Evaluation Sheet for Essay #2 (This must be completed before class and turned in with your final draft on October 23)

Name______________________________________________
Date_______________________________________________

Part A: To be filled out by the student:

1. What is your thesis statement?

2. What is the strongest part of your essay? Why?

3. What part of the essay are you most concerned with or would you like me to pay special attention to? Why?

4. What did you learn from writing this essay?
Part B: To be filled out by the instructor:

The thesis should make an assertion about the effectiveness of the argument and identify the criteria on which that evaluation is being made. It should be specific and focus the essay.  

_____/15

Examples and references to the text should support the thesis and correspond with the evaluation criteria. The body paragraphs should follow the PIE format. The essay should show critical thinking and a careful analysis of the text.

_____/30

The essay should be organized and coherent, with transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and ideas.

_____/20

Quotations and paraphrased passages should be smoothly integrated into the writing and should use proper MLA documentation.

_____/15

The sentence-level writing should be clear and without grammatical, mechanical, or spelling errors. The essay should follow the assigned format.

_____/20

Total =  _____/100